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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.



MINOR ARTS OF DECORATION.

WE now come to varnishes. These are both colorless and colored, the former being used either for protection or to revivify a dull surface; the latter for more direct ornamentation, and as a glaze, imparting to the colors of a design a general tone. The beauty of handsomely figured woods are greatly enhanced by varnishing. Stained imitations of wood are generally varnished. Clean and straight grained woods should be first rubbed with glass paper; cross grained ornamental woods must be scraped with a steel scraper. Fill any cavities with colored gum or wax.

In removing any old varnish before applying fresh, it is best to sponge the surface with carbonate of ammonia diluted with water, sponging afterwards with pure water. A solution of shellac is a very good varnish for furniture, care being taken that it is pure; it is dissolved in naphtha or spirits without filtering. Fifteen ounces may be dissolved in one gallon of spirit; or twelve ounces with one of copal in same. Shellac varnish may be made quite colorless by dissolving two ounces in a pint of rectified spirits of wine, and boiling the solution for a few minutes with animal charcoal previously fired; the varnish is then to be strained through silk and filtered through blotting paper. Shellac prevents brass from tarnishing, applied as a varnish in the proportion of two ounces to nine ounces of alcohol. It may be colored with gamboge. A varnish having much the appearance of gold when laid on certain grounds, as, for instance, a rich rosewood color, is composed of sixteen parts of shellac, three parts each of gum, sandarach and mastic, two of gamboge, all macerated and dissolved in alcohol.

For French polish, which imparts a charming surface to ornamental polished woods, dissolve six ounces of shellac in one pint of wood naphtha and then add one fourth of a pint of linseed oil. A very excellent French polish is made by dissolving two ounces of shellac in half a pint of spirits of wine, adding fresh spirits as evaporation takes place. With either composition the polish is applied with a rubber made of wadding. Another recipe is one pint of spirits of wine, one fourth of an ounce of gum copal, one fourth of an ounce of gum arabic, and one ounce of shellac. The best way of dissolving all the above compositions is to place them closely corked near a fire for a few days.

If it is desirable to hide the outlook of a window, and in the absence of colored glass a dead surface varnish may be used. An excellent imitation of ground glass may be obtained by making a solution of gum sandarach in ether, adding one fourth of as much benzole, and applying with a brush. A mixture of benzole, with the negative varnish used by photographers, will give a beautiful dead surface.

A varnish for gilt work is thus compounded: Seed-lac in grain, 25 parts, gum lac 30, gamboge 45, annatto 40, dragon's blood 35, saffron 30 parts. The two lacs which really constitute the varnish are mixed and dissolved in 130 parts of spirits of wine; the other ingredients are dissolved separately, each in 95 parts of spirits. These form the tinctures with which the varnish is colored to match the various shades of gold.

As a black ground on wood will set off admirably colored figures, as, for instance, on the panel of a screen, we furnish the following receipt for black varnish: Take spirits of turpentine one pint, one eighth of a pound of asphaltum, and place in a vessel on stove. When dissolved add one eighth of a pint of copal varnish, same of linseed oil, and a little lampblack. The following are furniture oils: 1. Acetic acid two drachms, oil of lavender one half drachm, rectified spirit one drachm, linseed oil four ounces. 2. Linseed oil one pint, alkanet root two ounces; heat, strain and add lack varnish one ounce.

The regilding of picture frames is quite an appropriate home art, and the enlivening effect of this regilding will often change the aspect of a room. The following is the method of procedure: Add water gold size to thin parchment size, and after warming them apply with a camel's hair pencil. Give two coats; then rest the frame on edge to dry, and afterwards sandpaper it. You then apply the gilding on a thin coat of parchment size; any parts that do not adhere are taken off with a dry pencil. To impart a deeper color to the gilding a size may be made of calcined red ochre, ground with the best drying oil, which latter should be old, and then mixed with a little oil of turpentine. A coat of parchment size is then put on and the gilding laid.

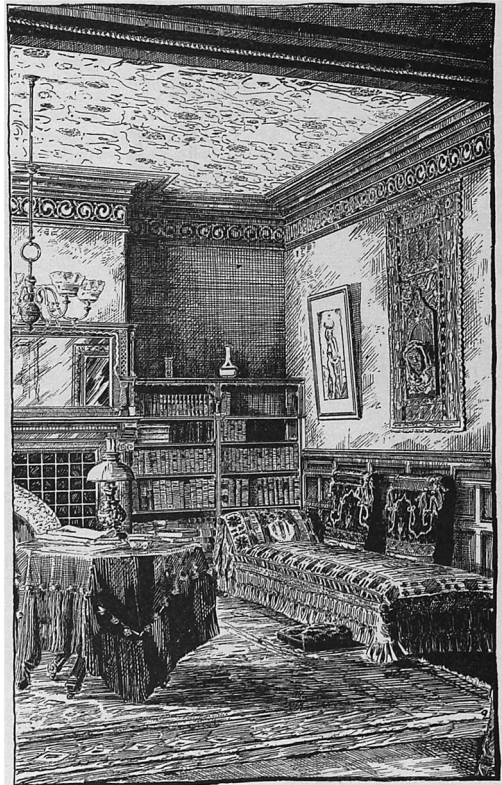
Plain modern picture frames, or those enriched by moldings,

may be greatly beautified by moldings of leaves, berries, etc., at corners and at top and sides by compo ornaments in relief, which may be made of chalk, glue and paper paste. Another composition may be made by dissolving one pound of glue in one gallon of water, boiling in another kettle two pounds of resin, one gill of Venice turpentine and one pint linseed oil, then mixing the whole in one vessel and continuing to boil and stir them together until the water has evaporated from the ingredients, next adding finely pulverised whiting until the mass is brought to the consistency of soft putty. The composition, when warmed, can be molded into any shape, and sets hard. Fruit, leaf and stalk forms will look well.

As to other modes of ornamentation of frames, the examples are so various that readers may be trusted to exercise their own ingenuity. Various metallic ornaments, particularly those in oxidized silver, look well on a light flat frame. There are a number of beautiful textile materials which if plain may be set off by embroidery applique. Even coarse materials, such as sacking, will look well if gilded and all the better for being rough. Ribbons intertwined and in bows afford an endless resource for ornament. Leaf forms may also be cut out of card board and painted, the colors being so chosen as to set off the picture to best advantage.

To simply polish walnut, cherry or maple, mix three parts of rather thick alcoholic shellac varnish with one part of boiled linseed oil; shake and rub briskly. The cheapest furniture polish is a mixture of linseed oil and turpentine laid on in a thin coat, that which does not enter the grain being rubbed off with a soft cloth; the whole is then polished. For basket work of split bamboo, rattan or willow, of natural hue or colored, a suitable varnish is made of very slightly heated linseed oil, with fat copal varnish added, and when cold mixing turpentine oil to proper consistence; this varnish may be colored.

As the dullness of old oil paintings is mainly due to minute fissures that interfere with the transparency of the colors, and increase the white light, a wonderful change may often be brought about simply by applying alcohol with a sponge. The alcohol softens the gum and oil, which close the fissures, and with the lessening of reflected white light, the colors brighten.



Library designed and furnished by Bradstreet, Thurber & Co., in house of John Crosby, Minneapolis, Minn. Walls in pale olive, ceiling dull gray blue, with raised ornamentation in green, gold and bronze. Persian rug of dull yellow on floor, couches extending around the room, covered with antique Daghestan rugs. Also small rug on wall as back ground for bronze head of Turk. Woodwork, cherry, natural. Frieze, Caspian green and gold.